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Culture of peace

Letter dated 10 February 2005 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Togo to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit the text of the address to the Togolese nation made on 9 February 2005 by Mr. Faure Gnassingbe, President of the Togolese Republic (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session.

(*Signed*) Kodjo **Menan**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex to the letter dated 10 February 2005 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Togo to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Address to the nation by His Excellency Mr. Faure Gnassingbe, President of the Togolese Republic, Lomé, 9 February 2005

Citizens of Togo,

Our country has been struck by a tragedy, the loss of the Father of the Nation, Gnassingbe Eyadema.

His sudden demise has deeply saddened the people of Togo, who are still feeling intense pain at this cruel loss.

We are all aware of President Eyadema's tremendous achievements for the benefit of the country's people:

- The building of a united, prosperous nation which is respected at both the national and the international levels;
- Peace and security for every single citizen of Togo;
- The construction of a peaceful democracy in which everyone can feel respected and protected by the State;
- Harmonious development of the nation's economy;
- Economic independence through food self-sufficiency.

Today, as we remember his great achievements, we collect our thoughts and honour his memory. Let us pray that we will be worthy of his heritage.

At this difficult time, you have found appropriate words as you share our grief and express in various ways your tender compassion for the whole Gnassingbe family.

I am deeply touched by this kind demonstration of support, which has never failed us in the painful trials we have experienced recently. On my family's and my own behalf, I would like to express my deep gratitude.

In particular, I thank the Togolese armed forces and law enforcement agencies, and congratulate them for their courage and faithfulness and the order and discipline they have maintained throughout the country.

I am also grateful to the Prime Minister, the Government and the National Assembly, and to all the vital elements of the country, which have resolutely stood by the Gnassingbe family.

I am deeply grateful to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which has kindly sent a delegation to present its sympathetic condolences to the people of Togo and the Gnassingbe family.

I also thank the foreign communities living in Togo, which have shared this time of grief with the country's people. As before, no effort will be spared to ensure their safety.

My dear compatriots,

Despite the depth of our grief, we must make an effort of will and look to the future with courage and serenity.

I have been entrusted with the highest responsibility, but I stand before you as one of you, and the national interest is my prime concern.

You are aware that I was appointed as a matter of urgency, following the sudden death of President Eyadema.

I thank all those who have put their trust in me and are supporting me.

I shall fully carry out the responsibilities conferred upon me by the Constitution to serve the people.

President Eyadema often expressed his profound wish for true reconciliation among all the sons and daughters of this nation.

His efforts to that end were beneficial in strengthening the country's unity and concord.

It is in that spirit that practical measures will be taken in the near future.

I have already decided to reduce by one quarter the sentences of those imprisoned for ordinary offences.

We also want those Togolese nationals who have chosen to live abroad to know that this is still their country and that they are free to return at any time.

With this same aim in mind, I have asked the Government to carry on the dialogue with the political opposition in a new spirit.

The 22 commitments entered into by Togo in Brussels on 14 April 2004 remain our basic guidelines.

We hope that the discussions which have begun to that effect, with a view to reviewing the electoral framework on a consensus basis, will lead to the holding in the near future of the free and transparent general election which the Father of the Nation had already called for, and which will reflect the real wishes of the population.

My door always remains open to all Togolese nationals, and particularly to the leaders of the political parties, so that together we can build our country.

My sole ambition is the happiness of the Togolese people, and I commit myself to swiftly undertake all the actions needed to promote participation by all in the management of public affairs.

I will continue efforts to promote human rights, good governance and the rule of law, which are reaffirmed in the democratic principles of the African Union and ECOWAS. I have no doubt that we will meet this challenge. I will take all possible steps to re-establish good relations between Togo and the international community, particularly the European Union and international financial institutions.

For the achievement of all these goals, I am above all counting upon our young people, who must show unity and solidarity and stand ready to make their invaluable contribution to this process of renewal.

I am also counting upon all the socio-professional and economic components of our society, particularly the Togolese armed forces and law enforcement agencies, who must continue to guarantee the peace and security necessary for the realization of our goals.

I ask them to maintain the unity and cohesion which are vital to their sacred mission of protecting our working population and territorial integrity.

I call upon all of you to be calm, to work hard and to be vigilant.

A new phase in the nation's life is beginning.

We must move forward together in peace and serenity.

Calmly and with determination, we shall ensure civil peace so that all Togolese people can freely go about their daily lives.

Citizens of Togo,

I count on your support so that our country can once again become the pride of humanity.

May God bless Togo.